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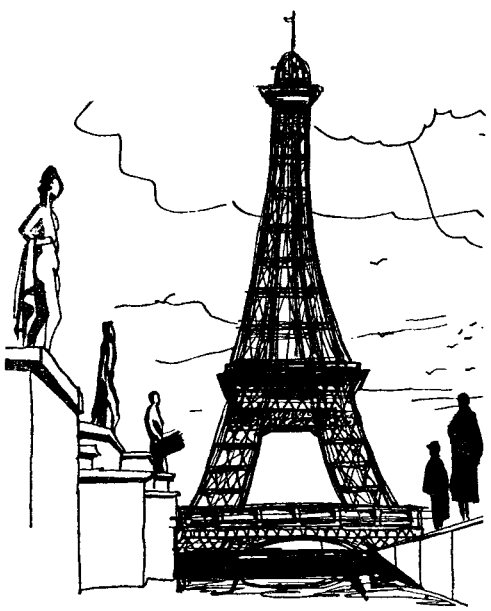

France:
Crisis in the MRP
by John C. Olin

Michael P. Fogarty John Cogley Philip T. Hartung

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The Commonweal

week by week

THE GUARANTEED WAGE

WALTER Reuther's determination to win a guaranteed annual wage in the automobile industry is giving a good many people a bad case of nerves. This reaction is natural enough. Detroit has become a key city in the American economy, and disaster there would spread fast. Secretary of Commerce Weeks recently predicted that 1955 might turn out to be the best year in all U.S. economic history. But even so, people do not like to see anyone rock the boat, and to many Americans that is exactly what the United Automobile Workers' drive for a guaranteed annual wage at this time amounts to.

We can understand such fears, but we do not share them. People have been talking hopefully about annual wage plans for years, but so far only three companies of any size have their own versions of such a plan—Procter & Gamble, Hormel, and the Nunn-Bush Shoe Co. The idea behind the annual wage plan is a good one, and a real chance exists to apply its benefits right now to a key American industry.

The demand for a guaranteed annual wage must be judged in the context of the current American scene. 1955 is not 1929. Unemployment insurance, social security payments, government manipulation of credit—Americans have come to take such things for granted. But they represent an important part of the reason the economy of 1955 is healthier than that of 1929. Collective bargaining has pushed real wages up substantially, not only in industries that are organized but as a natural consequence in other industries as well. As a result, purchasing power has more or less kept pace with industrial expansion. The distribution of wealth in the U.S. is still not completely equitable, but it is much better than it was twenty-five years ago, and American unions played a big part in this happy result. If we are less depression-prone than we were twenty-five years ago, the labor movement must get a large share of the credit.

Many people worry about the power of unions. Although this is not quite as great as the enemies of labor sometimes imply, unions do have real power, and it should be used responsibly. But to our mind, unions must have power in a society like ours if the power on the management side is to be balanced without constant intervention of the Federal government.

Real reforms have been carried out in the last twenty-five years. But the value of these reforms should not blind us to the underlying realities of American economic life. The picture many people still have of an America of small companies and individual entrepreneurs is a thing of the past. For years, the corporation has been the characteristic American form of economic organization. Today, fewer and fewer companies hire more and more people. Seventy-five per cent of American workers are now employed by five per cent of U.S. corporations; two per cent of U.S. companies are responsible for two-thirds of all paid employment. Over the years, the phenomenon of bigness has aroused profound misgivings in the minds of many Americans. Today, despite the New Deal, the process has not been reversed or even halted. Although there are more than four million business firms in the U.S.—up one million since World War II—the top two hundred produce slightly over forty per cent of all manufactured goods.

ALL this may not match the Jeffersonian vision of American democracy, but it does represent the true face of the American economy. The trend toward bigness has not been halted, and perhaps it cannot be, if our industrial output is to continue at its present rate. Yet no modern democratic society could tolerate the concentrated power revealed in such statistics without some counterforce. There has to be in economic life the equivalent of our political system of checks and balances. In the United States, 1955, organized labor is supplying much of the counterweight needed to balance massed economic might. Because this is so, freedom is safer than it would be if only government had

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power sufficient to check the influence of mammoth business.

It is in these terms that we see the UAW's current drive for an employer-financed guaranteed annual wage. What the auto workers are actually bargaining for amounts to a private extension of unemployment insurance, and the effect of this on the national economy should be good. Mass lay-offs in giant corporations can bring disaster, not only to the individuals directly concerned but to a whole segment of the nation's economy. Unemployment compensation provides a cushion against a sharp and potentially fatal drop in purchasing power. And it is almost certain one immediate beneficial effect of labor's drive for an annual wage will be to increase unemployment compensation in many areas where it is by present standards completely inadequate.

Annual wage programs reward planning by industry; they help to eliminate seasonal boom-and-bust on a plant-wide or on an industry-wide basis. In an industrial society like ours, therefore, we think the principle of a guaranteed annual wage is good and necessary—almost inevitable. The practice is not so easy.

We do not think it would be possible or wise to try to begin the plan with coverage for every auto worker on a fifty-two-weeks-a-year basis. In 1954, for example, Chrysler had a disastrous year; too rigid an annual wage plan might have put it out of business. But it should be possible to start off fairly cautiously, perhaps with initial coverage based on a seniority system; then as everyone sees how the plan works out and the funds build up, coverage can be extended gradually, year by year. The important thing is that a start be made. Up to now, it seems to us, many who believe in the principle of the guaranteed annual wage have not faced frankly enough the problems and dangers involved in putting it into practice. And many who only point out the dangers apparently do so because they really do not accept the principle. The editors of this magazine believe in the principle, and we believe the difficulties can be ironed out as they arise, if both sides are fair and moderate. There will never be a better time to put the matter to the test than now.

NEXT WEEK

JOHN K. COOLEY contributes some pertinent fragments of a recent Moroccan diary.

"The little waiter keeps me supplied with coffee and the Casablanca papers, but the spectacle of the great square is far more absorbing. Evening is coming on now and already a few oil lamps are being lit, as knots of people cluster closer around the story-tellers, magicians, witch-doctors, musicians, vendors, snake charmers and acrobats who perform on mats or near their tents of woven straw in the open square. Smoke from a hundred cooking fires is rising into the air, and a group of Sudanese and Mauretanian drummers are beating out their rhythms in a slowing rising tempo."

CANCELED TRIP

THERE can be little question that the Soviet Union has scored a striking propaganda point in calling off the projected thirty-day visit to the United States of eleven editors of publications for Russian students and Russian youth. The journalists in question first applied for visas to visit American educational institutions many months ago. When they asked for permission to come for a month last summer, it was pointed out that the institutions they had in mind would be on vacation. The proposed trip of the Russian editors was then postponed until this spring.

Now the Soviet Foreign Ministry has announced to the world that the visit has been called off because the editors refuse to be fingerprinted—a requirement for all non-official visitors by virtue of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act. The fact that last year, seemingly due to certain consular negligence, several Russian skiers and chess players did get in without fingerprints makes the present case all the more embarrassing. Our State Department has stuck to the letter of the law. It apparently also intends to hold out for fingerprints from the Soviet agricultural experts invited by the Des Moines *Register* to look into the celebrated Iowa corn-hog economy.

All this leads to several pertinent questions. Does this nation, which finds the idea of an Iron Curtain so reprehensible, want to increase personal contacts between the peoples of the Soviet Union and of the United States or not? If we are not committed to a policy of absolute mutual exclusion, ignorance and consequently heightening enmity, cannot exceptions be made in the interest of exchanges of visits? Surely, if need be, we could consider applicants like these editors "official" visitors; even if they should come over here under false names or false identities, where would the great danger be? How would unfingerprinted Russian farm experts threaten American security?

The State Department now intimates that the Soviet Union had no intention of allowing these

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editors to come here all along. Balking at being fingerprinted is only a pretext, according to this view. Perhaps the men in question are not as sensitive as their government makes out about submitting to a procedure which in their country and many others is required only of criminals. Even so, our official obduracy on this point has presented the Soviet Union with an unparalleled opening in the unrelenting cold war. The world now wonders whether it was not the United States itself that was opposed to the Soviet editors' visiting here in the first place.

DESEGREGATION TIMETABLE

DURING the next month, before it breaks up for the summer, the United States Supreme Court is confronted with one of the most difficult practical decisions in its whole history. It has already unanimously and unequivocally declared that "separate educational facilities [for Negro and white children in public schools] are inherently unequal" and therefore unconstitutional. The Court has yet to implement that decision.

Separate public school systems have been in vogue in twenty-one states involving over eight million white and two and one-half million Negro children. Since last year's decision desegregation has already begun in nine southern and border states and in the nation's capital; separate school systems continue unimpaired in twelve southern states.

In the briefs filed last December, and the oral arguments just presented before the full Supreme Court, there were several lines of attack. Representatives of states where desegregation has begun asked for leave to complete what they have started "with a minimum of judicial direction." Attorneys from the dozen non-complying southern states gave little indication of a change in their attitude. They sought a ruling that would leave indefinite, or in the remote future, the date for actual compliance with the Supreme Court decision. At the other end of the scale was the contention of the NAACP that there should be no delay in the granting of constitutional rights—not beyond this September, or next at the very latest.

Solicitor General Simon E. Sobeloff, serving as spokesman for the Administration, took a characteristically middle path in advocating a more gradual approach. He would have localities and states take the initiative under ultimate supervision of the federal courts; these communities would submit their own desegregation plans for prior approval.

On the one hand there are the strides the American Negro has made in recent years in such matters as civic rights, living standards, life expectancy, protection of the law and place in the community. On the other is the fact that much of this advance has resulted directly from economic and political compulsions. The pressure has to be maintained if second-class American citizenship is finally to be relegated to the past. The Supreme Court now has the formidable task of formulating precisely what, and how intense, the pressure for desegregation is to be.

THE AUSTRIAN TREATY

THE flag of Austria flew at a Moscow airfield this month as Chancellor Julius Raab arrived in Russia to talk about signing a state treaty. After ten years the Soviets apparently are willing to grant the Austrians independence. The severe conditions which they had, up to now, demanded, seem to have been withdrawn—although the State Department prefers to defer its rejoicing until it has read the small print of the agreement.

The Soviet treatment of Austria has been one of sheer cynicism. Time after time the foundation for a sensible Austrian settlement has been put forward by the Western Big Three and each time an excuse has been found—or invented—by the Russians to prevent agreement.

Now the Soviets offer a treaty. They do so not because the Austrian situation has changed but because the German situation has changed. Germany is rearming. The Soviets want a neutralized Germany. Therefore they will make unexpected concessions in Austria for the sake of the propaganda effect in divided Germany.

The Economist of London recently made a useful distinction between neutralization and neutrality. Neutrality is a freely-chosen national policy, like that of Switzerland and Sweden, which may be abandoned if the public wishes it abandoned. Neutralization is a status imposed on a state by external power.

Austria is to be neutralized. This is an artificial status, but one which can be reconciled to the facts of the Austrian situation. Militarily insignificant and of modest economic power, Austria has no desire to play a big-power role, and neutrality (in a military sense, certainly not in any ideological or moral meaning) might well be the preference of the majority of its people. In short, its political situation is such as to make both neutrality and neutralization workable.

West Germany is potentially the most powerful military force in Western Europe. It already has

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Europe's greatest industrial complex. If it were reunited with East Germany it would be the key state, economically and geographically, in the cold war. There is considerable German public sympathy for neutrality, but Germany's place and influence in Europe and the cold war is incompatible with neutrality on the Swiss model. Neutralization is the Soviet proposal for Germany; reunion with East Germany is the prize they offer. It is an alluring prize, but what the West Germans must recognize, and what the Soviets well know, is that Austria is no more like Germany than neutralization is like neutrality.

THE SALK POLIO FINDINGS

IN the nationwide rejoicing that Dr. Jonas Salk's anti-polio vaccine had proved so effective, reports of foreign reactions to the news of this imposing scientific achievement naturally had a subsidiary place. Emphasis was focused on the tremendous effort of Dr. Salk and local and other plans for administering these vaccines as widely as possible. Yet the news of this victory over a dread disease had a marked impact the world over, even though polio seems to be concentrated in those countries which are the most highly industrialized. Mentioned by the papers only in passing was President Eisenhower's request of the State Department that the details as to how the anti-polio vaccine is produced be transmitted to all seventy-five of the nations with which we have diplomatic relations. Here is a step which manifests the same statesmanlike quality as the President's earlier proposal about worldwide dissemination of knowledge on the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

BANDUNG BEGINS

ALL of the nations which met earlier this month at the resort city of Bandung in Indonesia have in common the quality of newness. Not all, of course, are new as national states, nor are they all newly independent. Some have had a precarious independent existence through the long years of Western colonialism. But none of the states represented at Bandung has played a significant world role in the modern age, the centuries formed and nourished by Western civilization and modified by the Industrial Revolution. Most of them have come to a place in the sun in the decade since the end of World War II.

Thus it was that the Bandung conference (which is beginning as this editorial is written) seems something like a final scene, a reprise and summation, of the first act of the New East. The struggle for freedom from colonialism is substantially over—from the old colonialism, at least. The struggle for stability will be the theme of act two.

In the first flush of independence, new enthusiasms and self-confidence led these politically young states to attach considerable importance to theories and formulae. The word was sometimes taken to be as good as the deed. But domestic politics proved intractable to too neat a set of theories, and economic doctrines have in many places been modified to fit the troubles and opportunities of the situation. So too the new states have sometimes been compelled to use force to deal with problems that ideally should have yielded to reason and persuasion. Military action has been used against Communist uprisings in India, Burma and Indochina. India and Pakistan failed to solve the status of Kashmir even at the cost of bloodshed. Regional uprisings and dissident revolts have challenged the authority of some of the new states and impressed on new leaders that force is the price that must often be paid for authority. Thus the lessons of responsibility have been taught in domestic politics.

Some leaders, however, have failed to apply the same lessons to international relations. This would seem to be a pivot of the differences between the Western nations, with their emphasis on mutual security, and the neutralist nations on the issues of the cold war. The neutralists place great reliance on moral suasion and such formulae as the famous "five principles" of Sino-Indian relations. Someone has characterized India's foreign policy as having "a high moral tone"; high moral tone does not automatically produce high moral accomplishment as another group addicted to a high moral tone, the Eisenhower Administration, has discovered.

High moral tone sometimes does not work so well when it is forced down to the thicker atmosphere of practical policy. In this, the Bandung conference may have a beneficial effect. Here, as in domestic policies, the real problems may prove too tough for generalizations. If, for example, the discussion of the five principles, one of which is non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations, is met by the protests of those nations which have had trouble with domestic Communist violence, there will be less unanimity in the results of the conference, but there will be more realism. These nations of Asia and Africa have enormous responsibilities; it is possible to hope that they will come away from Bandung with an increased respect for the toughness of the problems of the world today.

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Crisis in the MRP

"THE PROBLEM IS HOW TO KEEP THE CONSERVATIVE MASS UNDER AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP"

JOHN C. OLIN

TO analyze so mysterious a component as a French political party is a difficult process, and to weigh its future fate or even its present vigor must seem a foolhardy venture indeed. Yet the *Mouvement Républicain Populaire* is not as elusive an organism as a general view of the French parliamentary scene might lead one to believe. Its evolution is explainable, and the crisis it now faces is both logical and important. Here are all the elements of a historical drama, save the final *dénouement,* and the drama itself is heightened by the fact that the evolution and present crisis of the MRP is not simply that of another party or faction but an example of Christian Democracy in action. Not the only example, perhaps, and certainly not the only possible one, but one that is sufficiently important to reveal the difficulties and dangers that beset such a movement and to carry with it a lesson of general application.

The most obvious recent fact about the MRP is that it was in opposition to Mendès-France. During his remarkable but ill-fated ministry, and for the first time since the Liberation (with one minor exception), the MRP did not participate in the governing coalition. It abstained in the vote investing Mendès-France last June and in the vote of confidence on the London accords in October. It voted with the great majority against the ratification of the Paris accords in December and overwhelmingly against Mendès-France in the confidence vote in February which caused his fall.

This progress in opposition reflects the developing attitude of the MRP towards Mendès-France. What began as suspicion and abstention soon hardened into bitter hostility and fear. Yet, at no time did a "constructive" opposition appear, nor did a clear counter-policy emerge. Mendès-France was attacked as a neo-nationalist and neo-radical and as a man who offered only an illusory hope, and he went down under the lash of recrimination and revenge, but the style of attack never freed itself from the ambiguity it first displayed or from the confusion which became its characteristic mark.

Why was this opposition, in so far as style and content go, in such a chaotic state? Two factors, I think, account for it.

First, the MRP had actually little to oppose in Mendès-France. What they did have we shall shortly see, but the little was either insufficient or unsuitable for conversion into hard political coin. The second factor is that opposition was a new experience for the MRP and almost by definition a difficult and awkward role for it to play. One of the essential traits which the MRP had manifested in its political life has been its ability to collaborate—a feature of the movement which translated its basic aim to act as a bridge between right and left on the French scene, or more accurately to be a stabilizing center which could absorb and resolve the old antagonisms. Thus it took part in the early tripartite governments along with the Socialists and the Communists; after their disruption it was an essential member of the Third Force coalitions; and then when the Third Force dissolved it was present in all the conservative majorities which governed France up to the time of Mendès-France.

This second factor deserves emphasis. The MRP, unlike the Socialist party, had no mystique or tradition of opposition and, unlike the former Gaullist *rassemblement,* it possessed no antagonism for the existing parliamentary regime. As a Christian Democratic movement its function was to accept French democracy and to breathe into it a new spirit and vitality. A necessary part of that hopeful enterprise was to end the ancient divisions which had weakened and paralyzed the Third Republic by committing Catholics wholeheartedly to the renovation of the democratic state and to progressive social reforms. Thereby, suspicions would be removed, the old religio-political quarrel would be finally interred, and the pressing problems of the new Republic could be tackled in a more vigorous and unanimous spirit. Such a program does not exclude the possibility of opposition but it does limit it to certain extreme

Mr. Olin, a member of the faculty of Fordham University, is now on leave in Europe.

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circumstances and in the actual context of the Mendèsist regime it gave it the appearance of being unjustified and contradictory.

WHY then did the MRP oppose Mendès-France? The answer is relatively simple. He had attacked Bidault in the Foreign Ministry (which had been an MRP preserve since 1944) and he gave every indication of not supporting the MRP's most cherished project, the European Defense Community.

On the one hand, Mendès-France arose at a most crucial moment to replace Bidault, whose efforts in obtaining a cease-fire in Indochina had failed, and to break the MRP's monopoly in foreign policy; *on the other hand, he pledged himself to present* new proposals to end the indecision and bitter argument over EDC. He challenged both personality and policy and the double encounter evoked both a personal animus against him and the justification of opposing the program he presented. The personal issue, though lively, could hardly be the basis of a serious opposition, so the principal contention separating the MRP from the new government became the European program.

Given the state of public opinion in France and the aim of Mendès-France to reach a compromise, that was an unfortunate issue to stand so firm on, but the position of the MRP, in terms of its own orientation at the time, was not entirely groundless or illogical. The party had become the "party of Europe" and it had in its last national Congress in May reaffirmed its vocation in a series of strong resolutions which called for the ratification of EDC and the construction of a united Europe. The Congress ruled out any alternate policy as deceptive and dangerous and solemnly declared that it "will not associate itself with a government or with a majority which, in a manner direct or indirect, tended to subvert our foreign policy."

Since 1948 the MRP had emphasized its European program and by mid-1954 it appeared to have little save this ideology and this promise to offer France. Nearly every solution or explanation was made in terms of the basic policy of constructing Europe. Etienne Borne, the party's chief intellectual, at the May Congress analyzed the MRP's course of action over the last ten years, its full lifespan, in terms of its European policy. Here was one of the party's great revolutionary ideals and the only one which had achieved some degree of realization. Only too conscious of the frustrating reappearance of the Third Republic in the guise of the Fourth, and of the "drift to the right" which had carried the MRP along with it, Borne held aloft the building of Europe as a test of fidelity, a measure of progress, and a compensation for other disappointments. Cooperation with such conservative coalitions as those of Pinay or Laniel he explained as permitting the pursuit of the party's foreign policy. His total message was that despite checks, compromises, and failures one great ideal remained and through it the MRP kept faith with its original program of renewal. One could personally conclude that if the party sacrificed that ideal nothing would remain and that the restoration of the old order would be complete.

SUCH an appraisal and orientation could indeed justify opposition in a situation where the mounting forces of reaction gained control and threatened to overturn the whole European program. Then a united stand with other "Europeans" might be meaningful and effective, or at least a decisive affirmation of principle might be made. The real situation with the advent of Mendès-France, however, was quite different. He was no reactionary, nor was he a destructive anti-European. He sought to liquidate some of the most pressing problems—the war in Indochina, the smoldering rebellion in Tunisia—and having cleared the decks he planned to initiate some long awaited economic and social reforms. As for EDC he sought a substitute which would command support and end the long and acrimonious debate. Actually, Mendès-France did not kill EDC. He merely recognized that it was dying and he sought to replace what was moribund with a more living thing in the attempt to end the haggling and get on with the work of defense and reform.

The difficulty for the MRP in this situation was due to the preeminence and inflexibility which its European policy had assumed. If it had motivated the party's fruitless collaboration with an arch-conservative like Laniel, it now separated it from the energetic and enterprising Mendès-France. The MRP as the "party of Europe" had taken precedence over the MRP as the party of social reform and democratic renewal. In its own thought these vocations were by no means separate, but they were allowed to become separate in the political debate and maneuver that embroiled them. Thus, the original aim of the MRP to be Christian Democratic and lead the nation out of its wasteland of outmoded antagonisms and social backwardness was obscured by its dedication to a rather specific formula for creating Europe.

This was all the more serious and contradictory in terms of the MRP's original aims because this formula itself now deeply divided France and led to a crisis of conscience in the nation and in the National Assembly. The emotional and political breach that opened up between those who supported EDC and those who opposed, between the Europeans and the anti-Europe-

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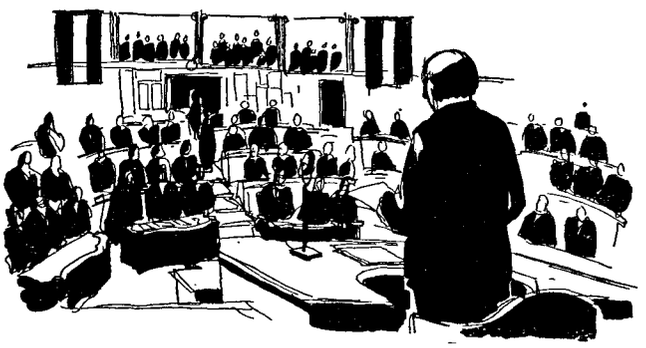
ans, was not unlike the bitter strife of former times between clerical and anti-clerical. In fact, that earlier quarrel reappeared to some extent in a contemporary garb—with many Socialist and Radical opponents of European union viewing it as a reactionary, clerical scheme, the project of the Catholic parties of western Europe in their attempt to create a *Europe vaticane,* a new Holy Empire.

WHILE the MRP was engaged in this controversial quest for Europe it slipped further and further to the right. Not only was the party collaborating with the most conservative elements in order to continue its foreign policy, as Borne pointed out, but as a movement of political renovation and social reform it ceased to have any clear goal or energetic program. It witnessed the secession of a number of disillusioned supporters and militants on its left and, most serious of all, it was separated from the Socialists over the question of public aid to Catholic schools. This unfortunate issue, exploited by the Gaullists in 1951 in



order to effect such a separation, did result in a form of assistance to private schools (the Barangé law), but it had the more serious consequence of driving the Socialists out of the government, rupturing the center coalition known as the Third Force, and driving a deep wedge between the Socialists and the MRP.

The total effect was paradoxical indeed. As the MRP became more identified with the political right and with a clerical position (contrary to its original aim to break through this outmoded and crippling political pattern), it became more difficult to push and implement that foreign policy which it bent every effort to maintain. The conservative coalitions which now attempted to govern after 1951, the new majorities of Pinay, Mayer, and Laniel, were dependent on Gaullist support as a result of Socialist opposition, and the Gaullists, ardently nationalist, were opposed to the program of European integration. The Schuman Plan was approved by the National Assembly in December 1951 against their unanimous opposition, but it subsequently was impossible to pose the question of the European army without disrupting the government. Thus, the parliamentary conditions created by the withdrawal of the Socialists, a good portion of whom were "Europeans," and the new influence of the Gaullists, all of whom were "anti-Europeans," condemned EDC to the slow strangulation that ended in its humiliating demise last August 30.

Jacques Fauvet, in a series of articles in *Le Monde,* analyzing this political evolution, described what he called a "double contamination." On the one hand, the government was turned further toward the right and its domestic policy became more conservative than ever; on the other hand, the "European" majority was split and that portion of it now in opposition was swallowed up by the anti-European left. "The error, the illusion, had been to believe that a certain European policy, initiated in the days when the Socialists were in the majority, could be pursued after they had been replaced either by the adversaries of that policy or the partisans of economic and social immobilism."

THE MRP should not have allowed themselves the temporary comfort of that "illusion," but whether they could have avoided the "error" in strategy that lay at the base of the situation is a debatable question. The highly controversial school issue having been thrust into the center of the stage by a powerful pressure group in which the Gaullists were very active, the MRP had to champion the cause of public aid to Catholic schools. In the face of existing realities any other course would have been impossible. If it had not, the major part of that large Catholic vote which it still retained would have swung over to the Gaullists or to other conservative groups battling for school aid and the MRP would have been destroyed as an effective political organization. The old dichotomy between clerical-right and laic-left would have become even more pronounced and what moderating or leavening influence the MRP strove to exert would have been sadly reduced. (Actually the Barangé law, granting aid to the parents of school children and not to the schools themselves, was an MRP compromise.)

Nevertheless, we have here an ironic and tragic sequence of events. If the entry of the Gaullists into the governing majority meant the sabotage of EDC, as an MRP leader has expressed it, behind that event was the withdrawal of the Socialists into opposition, a movement provoked by the Barangé law. In this concatenation the MRP stood almost as a spectator, one might even say a victim, amid the swirling eddies of French opinion. It was actually forced to sacrifice its most cherished European policy in order to retain its mass Catholic following. And when the waters subsided, the position of the MRP, politically and socially, was more conservative that it had been before. From every aspect—that of surmounting the clerical issue, that of political renovation or social reform, that of the

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European ideal—the MRP was on the road to frustration and defeat.

This demonstrates, I think, the root problem which confronts the MRP. Its mass electorate from the beginning has been Catholic and in the great part conservative. Yet, in inspiration and basic program the MRP has sought to escape the traditionally Catholic and conservative approach (the French variety) and to induce Catholics to collaborate with other progressive groups in the construction of a remodeled democratic society. The problem is how to keep the conservative mass under authentic Christian Democratic leadership in the day to day political struggle. The danger is that the electorate will secede in large numbers if the party is too faithful to its inspiration or too militant—or else that the party itself will become conservative in order to accommodate its Catholic supporters.

Both eventualities have actually occurred to an extent without fully resolving the problem. Since 1947 the strength of the MRP has been cut in half due to the appearance or revival of more conservative alternates for the MRP (its electorate dropped from five million in the first National Assembly elections in 1946 to two and a half million in the second in 1951, for which the formation of the Gaullist *rassemblement* was chiefly responsible). And this very situation has tempered and compromised the original idealism of the MRP in its effort to maintain its great-party status.

THIS problem, which has frequently been described as the great dilemma of the MRP, must be appreciated in the actual context of French affairs. Not every French Catholic is a conservative, as the existence of a long Christian Democratic tradition itself gives proof, but as a whole Catholics have been under the sign of the political right in so far as the historical issues that divide Frenchmen are concerned. Naturally enough they are not the proponents, like so many Radicals and Socialists, of a laicist attitude or a laicist policy—itself the traditional mark of a leftist orientation. Nor are they strongest in the so-called working-class milieu whose problems and grievances have given the Communists their greatest opportunity and support. Thus, any large Catholic *rassemblement* will be predominantly middle-class; it will have memories, at least, which alienate it from certain aspects of republican policy, such as its anti-clerical bias and its laic laws; and for reasons of doctrine it will be quite distinct from the Socialist and Communist movements. In short, in the pattern of French politics, it will tend toward the right if it is not already situated there.

These divisions and their labels may be unfair, outmoded, and artificial—and indeed the Christian Democratic movement from the start sought to rid French politics of them in the interest of a new and more constructive approach—but they do correspond to a historic pattern from which it is hard to escape. The persistence of this pattern has been one of the major checks of the MRP. It made the school question, for example, an extremely contentious one and it made the MRP's position not only a difficult one to take but one fraught with grave consequences.

This unhappy evolution from the original aims and the early hopes to the confrontation with Mendès-France and the defeat of its European program has today led to the crisis in the MRP. Mendès-France did not produce it single-handedly but he did pose the final challenge that initiated it. As he cracked, at least temporarily, the immobilism of the preceding governments, he cracked too the self-complacency and the false equilibrium of the MRP. One grasped what the party's European program had become, what had been sacrificed for it, and what other aims a Christian Democratic movement must have if it is to survive as a hopeful, dynamic force. At the same time one also grasped the pressures that surrounded its development

and some of the difficulties that must be surmounted in order to reach another goal. Not the least aspect of Mendès-France's function, in terms of this crisis, was to evoke that other goal, that hope of action and real reform which the MRP itself had cherished over the years.

What now remains? Does the MRP have the strength to retrace its steps and give new vigor to its original ideals? Or will it grope its way as a conservative Catholic faction in a parliament and nation already paralyzed by conservatism and factionalism? Perhaps in only the first case is there any future at all. But here the signs are not encouraging. Despite the participation of some of its best men in the new government of Edgar Faure, it finds itself once again in a conservative, makeshift, and unpromising coalition. The old game is resumed and whether, after the experience of Mendès-France, the MRP will show a new orientation and a new leadership remains to be seen. Besides, the hour is late and whether there is the time, as well as the strength, to surmount the crisis and pursue a better course is highly debatable.

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Demagogues in American Politics

REINHARD H. LUTHIN

DENOUNCING a political foe as a "demagogue" has long been an American custom—so much so that even undisputed demagogues have themselves so assailed their rivals. Thus Senator "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, South Carolina's Populist "people's pilot," charged his Senate colleague, Cole Blease, with demagogic appeals to the uninformed. And later, America's arch demagogue, Huey Long, publicly labeled Governor John M. Parker of Louisiana a "damnable demagogue." But where did it all get started?

During the early nineteenth century the voting franchise was widened. Manhood suffrage, with property qualifications removed, was inaugurated in state after state. Aspiring candidates, appealing to the newly-enfranchised thousands, made issues more attractive by using colorful phrases and spicing their speeches with abusive personalized invective. President Andrew Jackson became a caterer to the many, the technician of mass leadership, setting the pattern for the national party chieftain who, by vigorous personality and noisy appeal, makes political capital by waging warfare against the affluent minority. In Jackson's case, he used the fight against the United States Bank. Old Hickory's White House predecessors—John Quincy Adams, James Madison, and James Monroe—had been incapable of playing the game of the populace. Jackson's stump speakers reached the voters face to face in villages and cornfields, on city streets and in club houses with their harangues against the Bank and other "vested interests." Jacksonianism was a "leveling" process and it spawned demagoguery.

The opposition to Jacksonianism, the conservative self-styled Whigs, proceeded to go their rivals one better. On the platform, in the press, and through propaganda pamphlets they managed to transform their well-born 1840 Presidential candidate, General William Henry Harrison, into a log cabin-dweller, of whom it was typical, they said, that he drank the poor man's cider. The Jacksonian President Martin Van Buren, they charged, consumed vintage wines out of golden chalices. A fierce rivalry in simplicity then ensued between Jacksonites and Whigs—and the Whigs elected General Harrison, the barefoot boy from an Ohio mansion and scion of an aristocratic Virginia family.

Thus equalitarian Jacksonites and plutocratic Whigs played upon the popular mind in an age of the broadened franchise. And so the stage was set. Showmanship in campaigns became a basic practice. The early demagogues were talented exhibitionists and stump actors; their era probably represented the high peak of Barnumism in American politics. Distinctive wearing apparel, exciting pageantry, circus-like parades, "hippodrome" party conventions, popular music, homely jokes, dated anecdotes, roaring oratory, alliterative slogans and catchy songs—these trappings colored their campaigns. In direct line of descent were modern musical demagogues, such as banjo-playing Glen Taylor of Idaho and W. Lee ("Pappy") O'Daniel of Texas. In the late thirties, O'Daniel, a flour merchant, won the Texas governorship with his hillbilly band, which featured "Pass the Biscuits, Pappy" as his theme song.

AMERICAN demagogues have usually been strong for the "plain folks" appeal. They loved to portray themselves as ordinary, down-to-earth people like the voters, and each seemed determined to prove that he was more "common" than his opponent. "I am an ignorant man," proclaimed Huey Long on the United States Senate floor. Mayor "Big Bill" Thompson in 1927 told his audience: "They call you low-brows and hoodlums. They call me that, too. We low-brows have got to stick together."

To go with their "plain folks" appeal, the demagogues often shunned their proper names in favor of affectionate nicknames. The list of these is lengthy but among them were Senator Daniel W. Voorhees of Indiana, "The Tall Sycamore of the Wabash;" "Sockless Jerry" Simpson of Kansas; Mayor "Big Bill the Builder" Thompson of Chicago; Senator "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman of South Carolina; Senator James K. Vardaman of Mississippi, "The Great White Chief;" Senator Theodore ("The Man") Bilbo of Mississippi; Senator "Cotton Tom" Heflin of Alabama; Senator "Cotton Ed" Smith of South Carolina; Governor "Farmer Jim" Ferguson of Texas; Senator Huey P. Long, "The Louisiana Kingfish;" Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray of Oklahoma; Governor "Old Gene" Talmadge of Georgia, and a host of others—right up to the studiously plain and folksy "Joe" (never Joseph) McCarthy.

Mr. Luthin is the author of the recently published *American Demagogues: Twentieth Century.*

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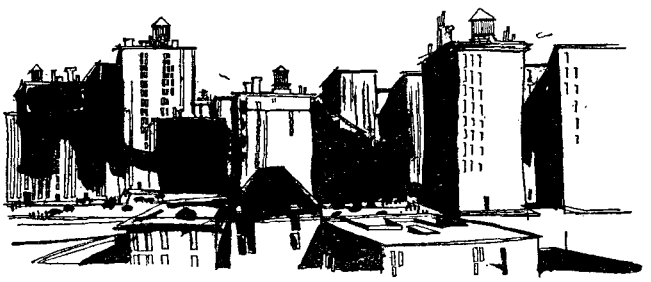
Demagogues always have had other characteristics in common. On the surface there appeared to be vast differences between the Northern and Southern types, but most of them exploited race and religion one way or another.

Northern mobmasters addressed themselves to the foreign-born, the "newer immigrants," and their children—the first- and second-generation Americans. Huddled together in slum neighborhoods, in Irish shanty-towns, "Little Italies," Ghettoes, and "Black Belts," these people were snubbed socially and ex-



ploited economically by the more fortunate on the "right side of the tracks." The demagogues courted them all.

In the South, demagogues fed the hates and hopes of the underprivileged Anglo-Saxon white farmers. By the opening years of the nineteenth century these farmers rather than the outnumbered "upper classes" or the disfranchised Negroes controlled the ballot boxes, largely by means of the Democratic direct primary elections. To get their votes—in the primaries and not in the old boss-controlled nominating conventions—Southern spellbinders attacked the rich, the city dwellers, the minions of Wall Street, the "interests," and aimed their coarse invective at such "furrin" immigrants as Catholics and Jews, and particularly Negroes.

Although demagogues have not been confined to a single political party, the Democrats—because they are the more "popular" party and made their bid for power in the South and the Northern cities, where there exists no formidable organized opposition—have spawned more of the type than the Republicans. Third parties, and mass movements, such as the Know-Nothings of the 1850's, the Greenbackers of the 1880's, the Populists of the 1890's, have produced them; in recent years, for example, the leftist splinter group, the American Labor Party of New York City, was the personal possession of the Moscow-minded Marcantonio.

American demagogues have usually revealed a basic anti-intellectualism, and always their distrust of educated men and women. Those who attained the governorship of their respective states, particularly among the Southerners, repeatedly tried to interfere in the public-supported colleges and universities. Governor Arnall of Georgia summed up the situation in his book, *The Shore Dimly Seen.* "The Southern demagogue," he wrote, "can no more leave the educational system alone than can his European equivalent. . . . It is the nature of the demagogue. Reading and writing are the two enemies that he fears most. . . . He fears schools and colleges and teachers and students. He feels that they are engaged in a single gigantic conspiracy against his rule."

Demagogues have always displayed a fierce hatred of criticism, bitterly resenting journalistic analysis, and this characteristic often led them to intemperate attacks on newspapers and periodicals. Senator Joseph R. McCarthy is of a new type of crowd-stirrer, but he only followed historical precedent when he attempted to persuade advertisers in *Time* to withdraw their support from a magazine which had criticized him. In recent years he has attacked some of the nation's most independent dailies, denouncing among others, his own state's two most widely circulated papers, the Milwaukee *Journal* and the Madison *Capital Times,* as "Wisconsin editions" of the Communist *Daily Worker.* But again McCarthy is only following a long tradition.

The majority of American demagogues were essentially ignorant, but they possessed rare talents for deceiving the citizenry. Most thoughtful and informed people show caution, sometimes even indecision, in tackling baffling public issues. But the demagogues usually come up with a ready, if shallow, answer. They specialize in the glib panacea that seems plausible on the surface; often they set themselves up as authorities on almost every subject. Usually, their simple explanations of the most complex problems stress isolated facts or alleged facts, with quoted material re-quoted out of context. But it has to be admitted that their simple explanations as to why so many people are unhappy—explanations in terms varying from "too many Negroes and Jews" and "too much Wall Street domination" to "Communists in high places"—have often proved popular.

Up to the second world war American demagogues were of two types. There was the "Robin Hood" type, the man who promised to take something from one class and give it to the masses with more voting power. Or there was the type who appealed to the public on racial and religious rather than economic class lines. Since the end of the war, however, a new type has emerged—those who, in an era of prosperity, disdain economic or racial pleas but address themselves to America's hatred of Communism. Because there was Communist infiltration into government agencies under Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, their scattergun accusations of Communism against their political opponents are often taken at face value by the public. This new school of demagoguery is strong-

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est in the Middle West and in the Republican Party. Conspicuous among its exponents are Senator William Jenner of Indiana, Representative Harold Velde of Illinois—and, of course, Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin, who is an opportunistic agitator, appealing to the crowd, playing on the fears of the uninformed, whipping them up against the men on top—even irresponsibly accusing the Republican Administration of President Eisenhower of being "soft" on Communists and fellow-travelers.

AT this point, a pertinent query might be: where does popular leadership in a democracy leave off and demagoguery begin? The answer is not easy. The term "demagoguery" is not absolute, and there is a bit of the demagogue in men who are rightly termed statesmen. Similarly, one will at times encounter some constructive qualities in a few of those universally conceded to be demagogues.

During his first term as governor of Mississippi, for example, Bilbo sponsored the most forward-looking legislation up to that time. But in the end his constructive work proved merely incidental. Huey Long as governor and then dictator gave Louisianians free textbooks, built bridges and roads and a skyscraper state capitol—but at monstrous cost in both money and civil liberties. As Jersey City's Mayor, Frank Hague constantly reiterated that he built the Jersey City Medical Center, with its Margaret Hague Maternity Hospital named after his mother. But for three decades he also exerted a virtual overlordship over almost every facet of life in his municipality. Like Huey Long's Louisianians, Jersey Cityites paid and paid for Hague's hospital facilities. Under his harsh and corrupt rule Jersey City became a place of old houses and dirty streets, with the highest tax rate of any American city of its size—as well as the Atlantic seaboard capital of the horse-betting world. At the same time Hague, whose annual salary as mayor was $8000, became a multimillionaire with three luxurious homes.

It is still too early to pass final historical judgment in this respect upon Franklin D. Roosevelt. He is today too ardently admired or deeply despised to arrive at objective opinion, particularly since he is such a major character. That he indulged on occasion in demagogic practices—his promise to drive the money-changers from the temple, his setting of one class against another, his thirst for continued power, his intolerance of the hostile press, his attempt to "pack" the Supreme Court, and his lack of frankness with the American people in his conduct of foreign policy between 1939 and 1941—should, however, be plain to all except the most unreconstructed New Dealer. History will have to decide, however, if this was the dominant aspect of F.D.R.'s political career.

But if it is not always easy to decide in each case just where popular leadership leaves off and demagoguery begins, study of the subject is nevertheless profitable. Demagoguery usually sprang from some wrong or neglect for which the upper classes—those on the "right side of the tracks"—must bear some responsibility. A basic source of the mobmasters' hold on their followers has always been their professed ability to relieve distress and unhappiness.

During the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries demagogic appeals were aimed at the neglected, the frustrated, and the dissatisfied. If the leaders of economic and social life had made more attempts to relieve real distress among the underprivileged and neglected, if they had been less snobbish and had forgotten their religious and racial prejudices, the props upon which demagoguery rested would not have been so sturdy. Had the Proper Bostonians been less proper and more just to their "newer immigrant" neighbors, for example, Mayor Jim Curley would never have risen to power and administered their city from the penitentiary. If the Eastern-dominated banks, railroads and corporations of the 1890's had not such a stranglehold on the economic life of the Western farmers, such Populist curiosities as "Sockless Jerry" Simpson could never have shouted his way to a seat in Congress. If the farmers and Cajuns of Louisiana had been given education and a decent standard of living, Huey Long would have remained only an obscure country lawyer in Louisiana's Winn Parish.

In the same way, if the other New Yorkers had been more concerned about the poverty of Italians, Puerto Ricans, and Negroes in East Harlem slums, the pro-Communist Vito Marcantonio would not have been continually returned to Congress. And if the problem of Communist infiltration had been dealt with firmly and fairly in the first place, present-day demagogues who make political capital out of past mistakes would not have found a fertile field of discontent ready at hand. Demagoguery is only possible when real needs exist and real challenges are ignored.

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Birth of a Problem In Race Relations

Cardiff

COLORED people make up about two-tenths of one per cent of the population of Britain; so few that if they were not colored you would hardly know they were there. They make up only a small fraction even of the immigrants now coming in. More immigrants have come in since 1950 from the Irish Republic—I mean the net entry, after allowing for Irishmen who have gone home—than the whole of Britain's colored population. And there are several times as many displaced persons and other Continental immigrants in Britain as there are Asians, Africans, or West Indians. But there are several reasons why this little minority of colored people is being heard of today to an extent unknown in the past.

First, it is growing much faster than it was. In 1954 there may have been something like ten thousand immigrants from the Colonies, four-fifths of them from the West Indies, though something should be taken off this figure to allow for earlier immigrants who went home. Secondly, colored people are coming in from new places, and are going to jobs and districts where they were never heard of before. There were always some in the universities, and there still are; only now they come mainly from Africa and the West Indies, with far fewer Asians than before the war. About one university student in fourteen in Britain is now from the Colonies. There were colored communities in several seaports before the war. These live on, but now their members are moving into many jobs unconnected with seafaring; in factories, as laborers in many trades, more rarely in shops and offices. And many recent immigrants have been going inland, to Birmingham and the other Midland centers where engineering and the motor industry are booming, and there is work to be had either in the factories or in trades like bus driving or conducting, from which the factories have drained native British workers away.

Thirdly, colored people are beginning to dig in their roots and settle permanently in the country. A very few did so before the first world war, and rather more—mostly demobilized seamen—during and after it. But most of us still found these settlers pretty exotic, even when it came to their second generation. I remember my own surprise, the first time I came to Cardiff, at finding opposite me in the train three colored girls whose Welsh accents you could cut with a knife. Even now there are probably not more than ten thousand British-born colored people in the country, and nearly all these are concentrated in one of two towns and one or two districts within each town. You could use Cardiff's civic and shopping center for years without realizing that on the other side of the railway line was a colored community the size of a small town. But all this is changing, for a great many of those who are coming in now intend to stay.

WHAT do the British think of them? There is little or no formal discrimination against colored people. Hitler is not forgotten, and Malan is abhorred. On a public platform, and at the level of principles, not many of us care to become identified with these men's views. Even apart from this pressure of public opinion, there are plenty of us who hold to the principle of non-discrimination with absolute sincerity; especially in the churches and the labor movement. But at the level of individual personal relations, discrimination happens often enough.

Remember that most of our colored people are immigrants, and everything that I wrote in this magazine some time ago about Irish immigration applies to them as well. They tend to drift into the worst jobs and the worst housing, particularly since most of them are by British standards unskilled or at best semi-skilled. If there is unemployment, it is they who are hit hardest by it. Their old social ties are broken, they are unfamiliar with the customs of the country—some of them also with its language—and they often find it hard to settle down. Some of them go to pieces in the process, land in the police courts, and the whole body of colored immigrants gets blamed.

If you want women, dope, or sudden death in Cardiff your place is Bute Street, behind the docks. Behind Bute Street is Loudoun Square, the center of the colored quarter. Vice in Bute Street happens to be a European industry, but in the public mind it is unshakably associated with the Asians and Africans who live next door. And to crown it all, colored immigrants do not merely start by being an "out-group," strangers to the country. They are marked off by their color so as still to seem and be treated as an out-group even after they have settled and grown roots. The last time I stepped off the Tube at Piccadilly a black face looked out of the control cabin on the platform. In terms of competition for London workers' jobs or houses or women, it might just as well have been a face from Belfast or from Latvia, with this difference—I would not have noticed a face from Latvia or Belfast.

Jobs, houses, and women are the main points of conflict. Skill imposes respect, and skilled men,

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whether professional or manual, do not have too much trouble at work, or even away from it. In one batch of West Indian factory workers brought over during the war, it was found that only one in twenty of those who by British standards were skilled or very skilled failed to make at least a passable adjustment to British life. But among the semi-skilled the failures went up to one in five, and among the unskilled to no less than five out of six. Among British workers it is of course the semi- and unskilled who feel least secure in their jobs; and it is just in these grades that the immigrants' competition is strongest and their threat, if not actually to undercut wages, then at any rate to reduce overtime earnings and weaken bargaining power against the employers, is most marked.

Difficulties over women and accommodation may affect colored people of any grade. Being immigrants, they are mostly men. So they naturally link up with white women, and other whites resent it. The landlords (and ladies) who refuse accommodation to colored people discriminate against students as well as workers, and the color bar found in many hotels and public houses applies to all.

Of course, discrimination is sometimes suspected where it does not exist. The seamen's union has a seniority rule which gives priority in hiring to long-service men. As it happens, this hits a number of colored seamen whose service dates only from the war. The "discrimination" is an accident, but the seamen in question naturally find it hard to see it that way.

Colored students complain more than anything else of the chilliness of British people. They suspect the cold shoulder, whereas it is merely the way the British behave among themselves. But there is enough real discrimination going on in Britain to be the beginnings of quite a nasty little problem.

SOMETHING is beginning to be done about it. Colored people themselves have as yet produced no first-class leader or over-all organization. But they have several organizations of their own, and from the native British side a variety of bodies have begun to take a hand; the Ministry of Labor, several city councils, the trade unions, university student welfare departments, and a number of church and social service agencies, including notably the Catholic students' organization. Legislation against the color bar has been discussed, though not so far very seriously. But these attempts to cope with the consequences of immigration leave a more basic question unanswered. What sort of movement of people between Britain and the territories from which the immigrants are coming, particularly the islands of the West Indies, do the British want?

Certainly we want some. West Indians coming here have found an impression among the British that in their homeland they worship idols, speak strange languages, wear grass skirts, and from time to time eat one another (this is quite serious). They for their part only too often arrive believing that Britain is a land of Christian church-goers, has no color-bar, and is an El Dorado where unskilled workers pick up wage-packets stuffed with five-pound notes. Migration has helped to clear away ignorance, and also to wake British people up to their responsibilities overseas. I remember how the hunger marchers from the North and Wales woke up us Southern English to the plight of our depressed areas in the thirties. The rush from Jamaica is having a similar effect now.

But just that is the point. No one supposes that this migration can solve all the problems of unemployment and low living standards in the Colonies. Britain cannot drain off all their surplus population, nor is that desirable; any more than it was in the case of South Wales and the other British depressed areas before the war. The most useful service of migration is rather to add, so to speak, a personal note to the many appeals made since the war for action by Britain *in* the Colonies. It also helps to build up a reserve of trained Colonial industrial workers, who in due course can help in their own countries' further development.

FROM this point of view there is no doubt about the desirable sort of migration. It is the skilled workers and professional men from the Colonies who have done most to win respect for their people and raise their status in British eyes, and to gain influence and make the Colonies' problems understood. A man like Arthur Lewis, the West Indian Professor of Economics at Manchester, is of inestimable value to the country from which he comes. And, thinking of the skilled West Indians who have made good in (say) the Amalgamated Engineering Union, I would not put them so far behind. And it is also these men who are best able to gain and carry home experience valuable for their countries' future. By all means let them settle here if they wish. But what is needed most of all is a steady turnover of these skilled, responsible people, coming over here to put their country's case, learn what they can, and take their knowledge back to use at home. The ideal is not that they should escape from their people to make a success of their individual lives. It is rather that they should stay with them to raise them collectively. And, of course, that we in Britain should do everything in our power, which means a great deal more than at present, to help them on their way.

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY.

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EDUCATION—AND ALL THAT

ABOUT a year ago Christopher Dawson contributed an article to The Commonweal that set off a running discussion in Catholic educational circles. Mr. Dawson wrote about the future of Christian culture. He suggested making the study of that specifically Christian culture which once characterized the West, the core of Catholic education in this country.

The article was enthusiastically received and the idea put forth in it has aroused increasing interest. Both *America* and The Commonweal have published other articles and correspondence on the subject since the original appeared. Mr. Dawson himself has expanded on his theme and answered certain professional criticism.

When such experts deal with a matter, the amateur should hesitate to enter, but one of the pleasures of having a column like this is that you can rush in where angels fear to tread.

I received what I suppose could be called a standard liberal-arts, Jesuit-type education. It began during high-school years. The first uneasy bouts with Latin and Greek got it under way and it moved with more or less logic to a final philosophy course in the university. (Later I topped it off in Europe, under the Dominicans, with some theology, but that was a break which few laymen get.) I think there were many things wrong with the education I got, but so far I have not envied anyone else's.

The kind of education I got went a long way toward answering the fundamental questions which bedevil all of us: who am I, what am I, where did I come from, and where am I now? In a word it is the kind of education that helps one locate himself—in the universe, in history and in the contemporary world.

Once those basic questions are answered, one is more or less ready for anything. It seems to me that the most one can ask from formal education is to learn how to take things in stride, and it is for this very reason that I envy no one else his education. Ideally, the kind of education I was exposed to catholicizes the student. (I use the word with a small *c*. How well we were Christianized is altogether another matter, dependent on many other factors.)

When a man is catholicized, what he learns after school years are over is mainly a matter of putting the pieces in their proper place. This is easily said but it entails bitter effort and lifelong application. He is daily confronted with the problem of integrating what he newly learns to be true with what he has long known to be true. For the abiding core of his belief is the simple proposition that truth is of a piece. A man seeking an education will be forever in pursuit.

With the kind of schooling I received, I do not feel for instance, that I can reject what is good and true in Marx, Freud, Einstein or anyone else. There are alien systems but there are no alien truths.

We all arrive in the world at a particular point in history. Everything that went ahead, good and bad alike, produced this world, the only world open to our experience. Ours is not of course a Christian age in the Dawson sense. But I wonder if there was ever a Christian age in any valid sense. There were times when more men were Christians than today and when the Church had more influence. These circumstances went to produce a culture that was more restfully Christian than ours, certainly. But who is to say that a natural insight of Thomas Aquinas is more Christian than an insight of Sigmund Freud, provided both are true? Integration was certainly more easily come by in the age of Aquinas than in this day of shattered truths, but because integration is easier is it therefore more splendid? We can learn more about man in this day and, yes, even more about God than Aquinas could know. (Theology did not die with Aquinas but expanded its frontiers.)

I take it that the Christian man, culturally speaking, is the integrated believer, not born out of time, sodden with nostalgia for another era, but a man of his own time and place. Today that means a man with the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the rise of Democracy and the Industrial Revolution behind him and with the Age of the Atom ahead of him.

Education can not integrate a man; it can only give him the tools of integration—abiding theological and philosophical principles, a knowledge of the past and the ability to use his mind to create a total idea of existence and fit each piece of new knowledge into it. This I think the present Jesuit-type system practiced in so many American Catholic colleges can do with marked success. From the Latin class when the unschooled youth first learns that all Gaul is divided into three parts to the final Modern Philosophers course, there is rhyme and reason to the system. Its success depends on the individual's ability to relate the present to the past, the new truth with the old, the untried with the time-tested.

Integration comes hard. Some grow discouraged and simply cling blindly to the past, rejecting the modern world as the work of the Devil and the past as the pure accomplishment of God. Others may grow lazy and retreat into negation and cozy parochialism. Others seem to miss the whole point and adopt a Catholic-ready-answer approach.

The present system undoubtedly can produce bigotry rather than calm sureness, narrowmindedness rather than receptivity, a prideful dogmatism rather than the humility of a constant seeking after knowledge and it can be pretty dreadful when it miscarries, as all the world knows. But I think that at its best it is pretty wonderful. We fail it; it doesn't fail us.

JOHN COGLEY.

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THE SCREEN

FLIGHT DOWN LABYRINTHINE WAYS

SARAH Miles, in "The End of the Affair," runs so hard from the Hound of Heaven that she does herself in. She loses the race, but she wins the reward. You must believe this to enjoy fully the film made from Graham Greene's provocative novel; and I discovered at the preview of this movie that my non-Catholic friends were somewhat baffled by the end of "The End of the Affair." They would really have been baffled if the film had stuck to Greene's narration of the events that occur after Sarah's death—events due to her intervention. Perhaps it was presumptuous of Greene to go far in proving Sarah's sainthood; and perhaps it was wise of the film makers to show her lover alone in the final scene, reading a letter mailed shortly before her death—a letter that convinces him of her conversion, and while some day he may follow her, now he too is too tired from running.

Deborah Kerr plays the lead role beautifully, with a sensitive understanding of this complicated woman who was almost a nymphomaniac until she made a promise to God that if He would save her lover from death she would give him up. And how hard she works, in her suffering thereafter, to convince herself there is no God. It is odd that the two men who do most to shake her disbelief are opposites: the atheist (Michael Goodliffe) who hates God so intensely for giving him a disfigured face that Sarah knows there must be a God for this man to hate; and the Catholic priest (played with tremendously effective simplicity by Stephen Murray) who shows not the slightest shock at Sarah's lurid past and calmly asks her: "If you don't believe in God, why keep the promise?"

Van Johnson handles the role of Bendrix, Sarah's lover, well, but the characterization, even more unsympathetic when visualized than when read, has depths that are much too subtle for this actor. He does, however, have the physical attractiveness necessary to intensify Sarah's suffering. But it is Peter Cushing who wins our applause for his brilliant playing of the difficult role of the cuckold husband who loves his wife and hopes to hold her in spite of her unfaithfulness. His dignity and sincerity in the role are so compelling that one feels if Bendrix would only get out, this husband and wife could solve their problems—but then of course there would be no tortured story; and there's nothing Greene likes better than to tie his people up in knots, even if the knots are frequently somewhat contrived.

In writing the script for "The End of the Affair," Lenore Coffee has caught well the essence of Greene. The film does not use Greene's involved back-and-forth method of revealing details, but plunges right ahead with scenes in chronological sequence until the detective steals Sarah's diary, and then we go back, as Bendrix reads it, and get her version of the story. Edward Dmytryk had no easy task in directing his cast in an off-beat plot that emphasizes emotion and characterization rather than action, and he has done extremely well. Perhaps John Mills, as the detective hired by Bendrix to track down Sarah's new lover (who turns out to be God), hams it up a bit, but this long film needs the comedy relief Mills supplies. Beautifully produced in London by David Lewis, "The End of the Affair" is an intensely absorbing movie that makes you think while it works on your emotions. It is one of those films in which the pleasure and gratification you get depend greatly on what you bring to it.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

THREE FOR TONIGHT

MR. Paul Gregory's diversion—a most apt designation—is a musical evening with the strong tang of cabaret, bound into unity by nothing so much as good will and accomplishment. Indeed, the specific audacity of "Three for Tonight" is to dispose so decisively of the paraphernalia of musical convention: the stage is to be cleared, we assume happily, for wit, for original perception and undistracted charm. Not quite, I must report: despite the passionate artfulness of Harry Belafonte's folk ballads, the skill and intimacy of the dancing Marge and Gower Champion, some interest is wanting in the evening at the Plymouth; the occasion seems soft and diffuse, insufficiently gathered at the center. For in courting neither the fullness of nostalgia nor the splendid vulgarities of skirt and sequin, Mr. Gregory has let slip from his grasp that necessary angel, *theater*. Certainly Hiram Sherman, the *compère*, cannot make it out of such dry verbal bones as are thrown him; however often and superbly Mr. Sherman registers an alarmed percipience, he is here largely an instance of conspicuous waste. Nor can the Voices of Walter Schumann redress the balance: their repertoire of ingenious sounds diverts considerably, but it would be idle to observe how limited is the relation of such activities to the proper concerns of theatrical art. Worse still, Mr. Schumann's Voices have been directed into a fearful benignity of manner—a fulsome *bonhomie* drenched with the idiocies of "public relations." How these voices do chat among themselves; how many white, bright teeth they so depressingly display; with what ritual intensity they carry their

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wooden resting-stools, quite as if about to participate in some new and notably esoteric *sacré du printemps*.

Against another such chaste and anonymous background, Miss Lillie, Ruth Draper, Emyln Williams have on occasion shown us art in the turn of a wrist, an inflection, a movement of the eye. Here, so do the Champions in their deadly parody of "gutbucket" jazz; so does Mr. Belafonte in his undiluted intensities of feeling. Yet concentration is ever the essence of such triumphs, and the flaw of "Three for Tonight"—indeed, of all "theater-works" in its genre—is their rejection of the fructifying tensions of form for the casual and benign indulgences of personality. (*At the Plymouth.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE MORALITY OF NUCLEAR WAR"

Elmhurst, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I read with interest both Father Drinkwater's original article on nuclear war [March 18] and the *Indiana Catholic and Record's* editorial comment [April 8]. Father Drinkwater's exposition impressed me deeply; I could find no fault in it as regards principle. In discussing it with my friends I found his interpretation of "indiscriminate bombing" the hardest to put over. It would seem that it may have to be modified in the direction suggested in the subsequent editorial.

Yet to state that "any explosive powerful enough to kill more than a few people at once is a weapon of mass destruction" in order to reduce Father Drinkwater's argument to an absurdity is also unfair. The principle of reasonable proportion between the intended good and the necessary concomitant evil must be the guiding principle here, as in all "two-effects" problems. Father Drinkwater enunciates this principle, yet he somewhat arbitrarily limits the legitimate object of "discriminate" mass destruction to armies, fleets, etc. It may be objected that those who supply armies (and those who supply those who supply armies) are an integral part of the total war effort and therefore a legitimate target.

The use of reason will enable us to solve the extreme cases easily. On the one hand an army poised and ready to impose the will of its superiors is liable to direct action rendering it incapable of so doing—even to mass destruction of personnel and equipment where necessary. At the other extreme, it is obvious that it is unjustifiable to kill the milkman who supplies the woman who drives the bus so that the bus driver can make bullets for the soldier, especially when one must destroy the milkman's house and kill his wife and children along with him in order to cancel his share of the war effort. In between these extremes there is a large area where the solution is not obvious and it is here the arguments should be centered. Expert opinion, military and political as well as theological must be brought to bear in a concerted effort.

There is one point in the Indiana editorial which I find disturbing: "The real justification of the present Western policy lies . . . in the fact that we never intend to use them [nuclear weapons] at all." This can be interpreted in two ways: 1. We threaten to use them but there is a secret guarantee that they are for bluff and bluff alone. 2. We may have to use them but it won't be our responsibility because the Communists will make the first move after our clear warning. The first can be disregarded as contrary to present fact. As for the second, this sort of logic could justify the use of any weapon. The hold-up man doesn't intend to shoot people, he just wants money. The real question is: may a certain action be done which will have the good effect of preventing an injustice, and the bad effect of a certain amount of killing and destruction? The answer must be based on the proportion between the good and the evil, on whether or not the good is by means of the evil, on the availability of better means, and of course on the intention of the responsible agent. If the action is so justified, we may execute it, and we may threaten it. If it is not, we may do neither. . . .

CHARLES KETCHAM.

"CATHOLICS IN CONTROVERSY"

Lakeville, Conn.

TO the Editors: For certain compelling reasons I did not catch up with my periodicals until some time after receiving your issue of Feb. 4 containing Mr. Kennelly's review of my *Catholics in Controversy*. I trust that this belated comment is not too late.

I am sorry that Mr. Kennelly did not say what he thought "Dr. Pfeffer's exact position" is and where it can be found. In my book I used his two most recent writings on church and state: "Something Less Than Separation," Chicago Law Review, 1951, and "The Meaning of the Establishment Clause," Buffalo Law Review, 1953. His basic position was stated eight different times and was in each instance an *assumption,* expressed variously, that "political governments have inherent incapacity" to legislate on "religious matters." He thus assumed a position that covered his thesis and much more.

Nowhere did I discuss *methods* of interpreting the Constitution or insist "that there is only one proper method of interpretation." I used the common method of scholars in determining the meaning of language in an ancient document: find out as accurately as possible what the language meant to the men who used

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it. From Jefferson to Felix Frankfurter this method has been repeatedly endorsed, especially by the Supreme Court.

The meaning of the religious clause of the First Amendment which I called "accepted" has been accepted in American legislative, executive and judicial history, and by scholars in Constitutional law, from 1791 to 1948. I referred to it as the "American doctrine" because it differs from all the other types of "separation" in other countries.

There were two quite different questions in the "Miracle" case: "Was the film sacrilegious?" "Did the U.S. Constitution prohibit a state law banning a sacrilegious film?" The Board of Regents had no concern with the latter question and answered the first affirmatively. I know, and wrote, that Catholics are on both sides of the first question. The Supreme Court said "yes" to the second question, but properly expressed no opinion on the first. I know nothing of the opinion of Catholics on this one. I have no idea where your reviewer got the impression that I thought the majority of Catholics were on either side of either question—or which question he had in mind.

J. M. O'NEILL.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN BELGIUM

Brussels

TO the Editors: As an American Catholic, resident in Belgium for the last four years, I would like to say a word about the present controversy here regarding Catholic schools. I would not claim to be objective, as I am obviously influenced by the opinion of many Catholic Belgian friends. . . .

First of all a word as to what Catholics here think about education. They believe (as is stated in the Declaration of Human Rights) that parents have not only the right, but the priority to choose the kind of education to be given their children. They believe that the duty of the state is to assure the existence of systems of education which would take into account the philosophical and religious convictions of the groups making up the majority of a country's population. Their belief goes even further. They claim that if there is a withdrawal of the subsidies accorded to Catholic schools by the government at present, or the passage of a law which forces graduate candidates of Catholic schools to pass an examination for which the jury is predominantly anti-Catholic (note that it is real anti-Catholicism in question and not simply non-Catholicism), then Belgian parents no longer have a real liberty to chose the kind of education to be given their children. . . .

A look at some figures: There are 699,000 pupils in the 8,200 public schools of Belgium and 903,000 in the 8,400 Catholic schools. In 1954, government subsidies in the amount of over 5 billion francs (approx. $100 million) were accorded to public schools and less than 3 billion francs to the Catholic schools. The new project calls for increase in subsidies to public schools and decrease for Catholic schools. To the Socialist complaint that in many communities there is no public school, figures answer that for 166 such communities, there are 942 communities where no Catholic school exists. Of course many nuances could be given these latter figures; i.e. in the overwhelmingly Catholic Flemish provinces, sometimes "public" schools because of the choice of the community are conducted by Catholic nuns. On the other hand, in three of the southern provinces, from one half to two thirds of the communities have no Catholic school. . . . In considering all of this, one must remember that although in Belgium the Catholics form a majority, they live in a society where there is a militant anti-clerical minority. . . .

In the midst of parliament's battle on the draft of the new law, the Christian Social Party organized a demonstration in which some 150,000 to 175,000 persons came to Brussels and by their presence in the capital city on a Saturday afternoon, testified their protest against the passage of the Collard law. Strict government censorship of all radio broadcasts denied that the manifestation took place. On the other hand, the government had hundreds of armed militia in the Brussels streets, and mounted gendarmes brandished swords at the demonstrators who milled in the streets (at one moment tens of thousands of them sat peacefully on the pavement of a large boulevard!). Hundreds of thousands of people in the provinces were prevented from coming to the capital to take part in the demonstration by barbed wire barriers on all highways, manned by armed militia. One provincial governor forbid all transport in his area, in order to prevent access to Brussels. (We Americans find this type of "demonstration" which takes the form of a parade, often with flags and slogans, to be very "continental" and a useless expression of sentiment. But in Europe it is a popular form of expression of public opinion, especially in cases such as this wherein normal means of informing the public were in the hands of the government and thus completely biased in their opinion.)

Rumor has it that the Belgian government may try to borrow money from—or in—the U.S.A. to help finance its program of increased subsidies to the public schools. Meanwhile Catholic parents, and especially those in low salary brackets (whom the Socialists consistently claim to defend), by the force of circumstances will send their children to the public school—not having the means to pay a tuition which becomes more and more prohibitive for the worker's budget. . . .

FLORENCE TRIENDL.

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An Appraisal of a Decade of American Writing

THE TWENTIES. By Frederick J. Hoffman. Viking. $6.

By HENRY POPKIN

ADVANCING from show business to the academy, the revival of the 1920s has now produced a work of solid literary scholarship. *The Twenties* is a full and sensitive examination of the important American writing of the period. It is carefully constructed to balance criticism against history of ideas: each of its seven main sections begins with an examination of some literary trend, which serves as the background for the close reading of a text. "Strategy" is Mr. Hoffman's word for his preparations, and the purpose of his strategy is to illuminate the mutual dependence of text and context. Accordingly, *Babbitt* becomes an example of "critiques of the middle class." Eliot's *The Waste Land* comments upon the dominance of science. *The Sun Also Rises* shows the effect of the war. *The Great Gatsby* speaks for "the very young." Willa Cather in *The Professor's House* interprets a passing traditionalism.

Mr. Hoffman generally succeeds. The contexts are generously documented and intelligently interpreted. The critical analyses are useful, informative essays in their own right. Even the intricacy of Mr. Hoffman's strategic patterns does not conceal the value of *The Twenties* as the fullest treatment of the liveliest literary decade of our century.

Unfortunately, the method sometimes prevents the working out of patterns not allowed for by the seven main topics. For instance, one looks in vain for a thorough examination of an idea that affected several serious novelists of the 1920s—the legend of a beautiful and gracious American past that was corrupted by the vulgar influences of trade, industry, immigration, and the city. It is a pattern dramatized, *mutatis mutandis*, by Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, and F. Scott Fitzgerald (especially in *The Beautiful and Damned*). Mr. Hoffman briefly indicates its existence in the section that ends with an analysis of *The Professor's House*, but no opportunity is given for any comparative examination of the novelists—Fitzgerald and Mrs. Wharton do not belong here because they have been assigned to other categories.

Another omission stems from Mr. Hoffman's perfectly understandable desire to avoid the pitfalls of previous studies of the period. He is concerned especially with combatting sensational and frivolous attitudes, and he does this chiefly by being neither sensational or frivolous himself. Instead, he maintains a consistent tone of sobriety and makes a point of not telling the familiar anecdotes. *Restraint* is not a strong enough word for a performance of this kind; *virtuosity* is more like it, for this is a period which, like the English eighteenth century, invariably tempts the historian into anecdotage. Not only are Peaches Browning and Al Capone out of the picture, but Mr. Hoffman denies us that favorite Fitzgerald-Hemingway story of which all the critics are so fond. (For the record—F: "The very rich are different from us." H: "Yes, they have more money.") This superhuman restraint has its limits; one of the chapters is called "The Rich Are Different." Mr. Hoffman discreetly relegates his jokes to footnotes.

One may justifiably wonder if the authors of the time were quite so grimly reflective as Mr. Hoffman implies. Surely their concern was not alone with values, interpretations, and adjustments. They often expressed a passion for experience, a nervous itch that sometimes had the appearance of a fear that, at any moment, some unique experience was being missed. And so they or their characters go off to the city, to the bull-ring, to Paris, wherever things are stirring. This thirst for experience might well be a topic worth developing along with Mr. Hoffman's favored seven. Its intellectual context could be provided from the literary critics of the 1920s. Mr. Hoffman summarizes I. A. Richards' justification for poetry: "the worst mistakes for man are that he not live fully, that his experience be too narrow, or that he waste opportunities to organize his entire emotional and experiential nature." Also relevant is J. E. Spingarn's "creative criticism," which entailed reliving the creative process, as well as the less philosophical but equally emotional approach of such journeyman critics as Mencken and Rascoe. This 1920s tactic of hurrying after the experience that might get away is apparently related to the period's violence against such barriers to freedom as the war, the Puritans (however mistakenly conceived), and prohibition.

The most serious omission may be the product of Mr. Hoffman's hostility to frivolous interpreters of the 1920s. As he rejects out of hand the frivolity of the viewer, he dismisses a bit too hastily the frivolity of the thing viewed. This is not to say that Frederick Lewis Allen's *Only Yesterday* or such stage musicals as "The Boy Friend" and "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" tell the truth about the decade. But neither does Mr. Hoffman, who finds that a salient feature of the 1920s was "a fundamental pessimism . . . It was a pessimism *faute de mieux*: There seemed no justification for optimism."

The scattered references include an elegant tribute to the comic art of Sinclair Lewis; the discovery that dramatic expressionism scored its greatest triumphs in such comedies as Elmer Rice's "The Adding Machine" and Kaufman and Connelly's "Beggar on Horseback;" the statement that H. L. Mencken was animated not so much by a serious concern with the deficiencies of his countrymen as by the thought that he could enjoy them as he would the inmates of a zoo; and the disclosure that dada

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was the product of a facetious spirit. But Mr. Hoffman pays less attention to other comic aspects of the time, including the specifically satiric qualities of Cummings, Pound, and Eliot and the whole process of reestablishing that "line of wit" which Cleanth Brooks celebrated a decade later in *Modern Poetry and the Tradition*. He overlooks the intellectuals' interest in Charlie Chaplin, *Krazy Kat*, and Ring Lardner. More significant, however, than any single omission is the general point that requires to be made: when the writers of the 1920s chose to criticize their elders or tradition or the Puritans or anything else, they chose to be satirical and not pontifical. Granted, there is bitterness in the best of this satirical writing; these are not mere funnymen like the general run of the contributors to *Vanity Fair* and the *New Yorker*. There are bitter strains in Eliot, Pound, Cummings, Lardner (in his best stories), Lewis (usually weakest when he tried to be serious), Fitzgerald (when he chose to be comic), and even Chaplin and *Krazy Kat*. And yet the bitterness is usually accompanied by a comic exuberance. The same combination of qualities occurs in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which is the 1920s' masterpiece of bitterness and comic exuberance. A vigorous comic spirit was alive then, and some consideration of it is indispensable to any study of the 1920s.

George Revisited

HENRY GEORGE. By Charles Albro Barker. Oxford. $9.50.

By ROBERT LUDLOW

IN this most lively and readable of Henry George biographies—well documented, scholarly, objective—George emerges as indeed a man of contradictions and yet the inconsistencies of his thought and action add up to an understandable pattern. If he may be regarded as an early municipal socialist, he nevertheless admitted that at least in theory he preferred anarchism to socialism and the economic reasoning in *Progress and Poverty* rests "on the nineteenth century's common, hedonistic and selfish pleasure-pain psychology." He was always conservative as regards capitalism—he made no attempt to change man's nature but only to change the operation of the laws of economics.

Despite this seemingly mechanistic point of view, he held that there is no historical necessity compelling the fulfillment of the moral law—which for him included economic law. At one point, as Mr. Barker points out, he writes approvingly of what he terms the ideal of Jeffersonian democracy—the abolition of government; yet later, in the same book *(Progress and Poverty)*, he expresses the hope that government will become the administrator of a great cooperative society. I think the thread of consistency in all these lies in his double fear, on the one hand of an utterly lawless society, and of a strong centralized society on the other hand. Towards the end of his life he expressed disapproval of those of his followers who would have played down the socialistic elements and made of his program a businessman's affair narrowly concerned with the single tax. And yet he also drew farther away from socialism, no longer advocating nationalization and welcomed the term single tax as accentuating that difference.

Another attitude of George's which is contradictory, and yet explainable, is both repugnant and harder to understand: While decrying monopoly in all forms he nevertheless did not hesitate to regard the United States as a white man's monopoly and showed little understanding of Chinese and Negroes. I say this is explainable because it was then the common attitude of organized labor; one recalls that it was also the point of view of such a radical as Jack London. It still is more than regrettable that a man like George was so limited and provincial in this regard.

For Catholics, the case of Father McGlynn is of special interest. I think the author is quite correct in stating that the attitude of Cardinals Gibbons and Manning to both Georgism and the Knights of Labor was quite negative and that they opposed the condemnation of George's works and of Father McGlynn primarily because they felt the movement was on its last legs anyway, believing that for the Church to make an issue of it would only help to keep it alive. But the central ideas of Henry George are as pertinent today as they ever were, and it is regrettable they are not taken more seriously. His attitude towards the State is especially important in these days of centralization and his economics, while lacking the halo of natural law with which he was wont to surround it, awaits the pragmatic test.

Seven Stories

THE BRIDE OF THE INNISFALLEN. By Eudora Welty. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

By JEAN HOLZHAUER

THESE seven new stories by Eudora Welty are continued demonstration of the author's peculiar talent: a talent considerable in its power, assiduously directed to delineation of mood and atmosphere. Miss Welty's writing is "feminine" in both the best and the worst senses: it is sympathetic, generous and intuitive; it is also fragile, verbose and hypersensitive. The author, it could be said, rarely gets to the heart of her material, but is very good around the smaller veins.

The title story of this collection is an example in point. A protracted account of a journey, it explores every nuance of the travelers' shared emotion and in the process records some wonderful exchanges between them. Miss Welty writes dialogue by ear, and never falters. The story also, however, contains a welter of subordinate observation, and tends to distract one with such asides as: "The school girl bent lower still, and, still reading, opened a canvas satchel at her feet, in which—all looked—were a thermos, a lunchbox under lock and

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key, a banana, and a Bible. She selected the banana by feel, and brought it up and ate it as she read."

In a story essentially serious, the high comedy of conversation among the wayfarers is well wrought artistic relief. The unintentional comedy of the banana girl—and there are many other such instances—is another matter, making one wish that the author had disciplined her perceptions a bit.

She fares better in "Circe," a pure fantasy of the enchantress with a penchant for turning men into swine. Here, perhaps for want of familiarity with the situation, one is less aware of incongruity: if there is one moon-struck rumination, or one pig, too many, who is to know? The mood of rampant unreality is well sustained; we do not look for discipline in madness.

In the rest of the stories as in the title work, however, one is troubled by the feeling that they do not quite come off. "No Place for You, My Love" is a tale of potential romance. In it an empathetic pair meeting for the first time in New Orleans are mutually impelled to find out where the south road goes. They drive, ferry, and drive again for hours—the heat, dust, impoverishment, crudity, insects and grinning crocodiles they meet almost palpable.

The road ends in a bayou, the journey with a beer in a country saloon. The man and woman drive painfully back to the city. The road went nowhere, potentiality never actualized. This is a legitimate and moving theme, but as it is handled, in its profuse detail, it reminds of The King's Horses and The King's Men marching up the street and marching down again: display and exercise more or less for their own sakes.

In our day, individualistic and personal writers like Miss Welty deserve honor and, rather surprisingly, get it. This circumstance should not make us over-hospitable to preciousness, however, and it cannot quell our natural literary longing for bolder, more incisive strokes and larger themes.

Bitter-Sweet

MOTHER AND SON. By I. Compton-Burnett. Julian Messner. $3.50.

By EDWIN KENNEBECK

IVY Compton-Burnett's new novel is, fortunately, almost the same mixture as before—a bitter solution of distilled conversation with about .01% of author's comment. However there are traces of sweetness now, and a mysterious precipitation seems to have occurred. At least one passage separates itself from the rest and settles at the bottom. It is a scene in which a woman, Hester, speaks out some unpleasant truths that she has promised to keep secret. Actually such revelations are a matter of course in most Compton-Burnett families, but we are used to hearing them from persons who are concerned equally with emotions and with their choice of words. Hester, revealing her shameful knowledge in time to spoil two incipient marriages, gives the impression that her emotions

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Franziskus Stratmann, O. P.

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won out. "I cannot look on and see lives laid waste for want of a word in time," she says. "I have said the word and can be silent. Whatever happens, it will have been said." What makes this strong and moving scene lose effectiveness is only its air of being out of place within the novel's carefully measured limits.

The change was mildly evident in Miss Compton-Burnett's previous novel, *The Present and the Past,* when one or two characters made kind and unselfish statements that escaped demolishing. These had their effect on the very construction of the story, for Miss Compton-Burnett's peculiar use of astute, self-conscious dialogue sets limitations not only of verbal technique but of tone as well.

On these limitations the very effectiveness of the method depends. A good artifact attempts to "transcend" such strictures without violating them. It is disconcerting to see the arbitrary rules arbitrarily broken, as in a still-life I once saw that included a slice of watermelon to which the painter had attached real watermelon seeds. This may be fun but it is hardly fair. For the most part this novel of hypocrisy, fake sentimentality, disillusionment, marriage and spinsterhood testifies to Miss Compton-Burnett's inventiveness, her unique wit, and her wry insight into the problem of how we stand in the eyes of others.

Much of her wit lies in a kind of word-play involving implied definitions and connotations of human self-esteem:

> "Do we use the same china as usual?"
>
> "I am ashamed to say we use a better one. We make a difference for guests, which of course stamps us. And we behave as if we did not, which stamps us further . . ."

Even more complex is a statement by a woman concerning "men who respect womanhood":

> "They may seem odd to us, when we know about it. Of course women respect it, but they are the gallant sex. And they are women themselves, and women take personal views of things. But perhaps that is gallant."

A very funny scene, around a piece of "plain cake" at tea, renders a delicately convoluted attempt at face-saving. Each of the dozen or so characters stands roundly individual, interesting (despite some flat passages) separate from the others. Among them is a cat named Plautus, described without condescension, but likely to remain memorable to many readers for his unwavering integrity and staunch indifference under a relentless barrage of human feelings and declarations.

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Jean Holzhauer writes frequently for this magazine.

Edwin Kennebeck is on the staff of a New York publishing firm.

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